



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/904,741	07/13/2001	Ronald G. Brock SR.	058351-010200	3364
33717 7590 12/27/2007 GREENBERG TRAURIG LLP (LA) 2450 COLORADO AVENUE, SUITE 400E INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT SANTA MONICA, CA 90404			EXAMINER MILEF, ELDA G	
			ART UNIT 3692	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 12/27/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Application Number: 09/904,741
Filing Date: July 13, 2001
Appellant(s): BROCK, RONALD G.

MAILED

DEC 27 2007

GROUP 3600

Steve P. Hassid
For Appellant

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

This is in response to the appeal brief filed 9/24/2007
appealing from the Office action mailed 1/24/2007.

(1) Real Party in Interest

A statement identifying by name the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

The examiner is not aware of any related appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

(3) Status of Claims

The statement of the status of claims contained in the brief is correct.

(4) Status of Amendments After Final

The appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief is correct.

(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief is correct.

(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

The appellant's statement of the grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal is correct.

(7) Claims Appendix

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

(8) Evidence Relied Upon

5,857,174	Dugan	1-1999
6,609,118	Khedkar et al.	8-2003
5,680,305	Apgar	10-1997

"Three More Companies Become WebLink Wireless Enterprise Solutions Partners; Datamatic, LynkUs and VoiceLink Join 19 Other Companies in Wireless Data Effort" PR Newswire. New York, May 4. 2000. pg. 1.

(9) Grounds of Rejection

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

1. Claims 1,2,4,57 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dugan (U.S. Patent No. 5,857,174) in view of Khedkar et al. (hereinafter Khedkar U.S. Patent No. 6,609,118).

Re claim 1: Dugan discloses:

a real estate database storing data for each of said plurality of real estate properties, said data comprising at least one of address data, ownership data, physical characteristics data, size data, geographic location data and monetary value data wherein said real estate database further stores an actual monetary value for each of said plurality of real estate properties, a plurality of monetary value-effective characteristics generally associated with real estate properties-see ("database") col. 6 lines 19-65, ("The database 24 stores each property as a separate searchable record. The sales data for each property can then be compared with other sales for an ongoing indication of market values by each property, class, size, category, or other similar factors...The weights or preferences are preferably arranged into five categories 110, including Location 112...Facilities 116...")-see col. 7 lines 4-32, col. 8 lines 11-18,

an interface system for enabling a system user to input a request for a comparison of at least a portion of said data of said at least two of said plurality of real estate properties, said request comprising information sufficient to identify said at least two of said plurality of real estate properties, wherein said request comprises the selection of physical rating parameter and/or location rating parameter ("The buyer is able to indicate the relative values by selecting amongst the range of allowed IPS values for each category 110.")-see col. 7 lines 36-65, , col.9 lines 44-48,col. 10 lines 65-col. 11 line 5, col. 12 lines 11-24;

a processor which uses said information to obtain said comparison of at least a portion of said data of said at least two of said plurality of real estate properties, wherein said processor is configured to provide a physical rating and a location rating for each of said at least two of said plurality of real estate properties; -see col.9 lines 20-62, col. 11, lines 5-13;

and a delivery system for providing to said system user said comparison of at least a portion of said data of said at least two of said plurality of real estate properties, comparison comprises, for each of said at least two of

said plurality of real estate properties, said physical rating, said location rating, said actual monetary value; and said market standard monetary value; and wherein said physical rating parameter and/or said location rating parameter are used to select the at least two of said plurality of real estate properties provided in said comparison.-see col. 7 lines 60-65, col. 8 line 50- col. 9 line 3, col. 11 lines 6-12m col. 12 lines 46-52, col.14.

Although Dugan discloses categories of elements and an IPS value used to arrive at an appraised value of the subject property-see cols. 4 and 5 and that dollar adjustments used to reduce or increase the value of a subject property based on important attributes based on general distinctions of time, location and physical characteristics has been done by appraisers in the past-see Background of the Invention col.1, Dugan does not specifically disclose that a standard monetary value for each of said plurality of monetary value-effecting characteristics is applied and wherein said processor is configured to use at least one of said standard monetary value for each of said plurality of monetary value-effecting characteristics to obtain a market standard monetary value for each of said at least two of said

plurality of real estate properties. Khedkar, however teach ("FIG. 11 shows possible adjustments 210 (in thousands of dollars to a comparable's price, as a function of the different number of bathrooms between the subject and comparable property...")-see col. 10 lines 32-59, and cols. 8-13. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Dugan to include applying a standard adjustment value pertaining to a particular attribute as taught by Khedkar in order to determine a measurement of similarity between each comparable property and the subject property.

Re claim 2: Dugan discloses:

an input system configured to permit the inputting of real estate property data into said database.-see col. 6, lines 39-44 and col. 9, lines 10-19.

Re claims 4: Dugan do not specifically disclose wherein the comparison further comprises a list presented to said system user of each said standard monetary value used by said processor to obtain said market standard monetary value for each of said at least two of said plurality of real estate properties.

Khedkar however, teaches a system wherein ("Each property's

sales price is adjusted to better reflect the subject property's value by using a rule set that uses additional property attributes, such as for example, construction quality, conditions, pools, fireplaces, etc.")-see cols. 8-10, and Fig. 12 and related text.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Dugan to include a display including the monetary adjustments made to a comparable property's sale price to arrive at an adjusted price as taught by Khedkar in order for the user to view the factors influencing the differences in the valuation of the properties.

Re claim 57: Dugan discloses selection of unit type for use in searching real estate database-see fig, 6a (136) Residence and Fig. 7a Rural Residential Acreage.

2. Claims 6-17, 41-45, 51-56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dugan in view of Apgar (U.S. Patent No. 5,680,305).

Re claim 6: Dugan discloses:

selecting a plurality of physical factors generally associated with real estate properties of a type similar to that of the subject real estate property("It is another object

of the invention to provide a real estate appraisal method that sets standardized, objective, and well-defined factors used to appraise property so as to be easily understood and applied..."-see col. 4 lines 53-67, Figs. 6 (a,c,e,g,i,k) -see FACILITIES and IMPROVED;

attributing a weight indicator having a numerical representation to each of said plurality of physical factors-see "I.P.S." values), Figs. 6 (a,c,e,g,i,k) and col. 7 lines 14-40;

dividing said plurality of physical factors into a plurality of sets each having a number of physical factors, said number comprising at least two, wherein said weight indicators of each of said plurality of physical factors in said each of said plurality of sets is equal. The Facilities and Improved sets are made up of a number of physical attributes which are considered when determining the IPS value. The I.P.S value taught by Dugan in each set (Facilities or Improved) are the same for that set, for example in Figure 6(a), the total IPS value for the category Facilities is 15 and the category Improved is 35.

evaluating each of said plurality of physical factors and attributing to each of said plurality of physical factors a

factor score; obtaining a total weighted score based on said plurality of factor scores ("After the heading information, six categories 110 are listed, including the five categories previously described with respect to evaluation slide 26...Next to each category 110 is a list of illustrative competitive desirability factors 125. These desirability factors 125 allow the appraiser or buyer that is filling out the form, to have some indication as to what attributes of the comparable property is to be assessed for each particular category 110")-see col. 9 lines 39-48. In order to arrive at an I.P.S. value for each category (set) of physical factors, the user in Dugan must evaluate the property based on the desirability factors 125. Therefore, it is obvious from the teachings of Dugan, that the desirability factors must be assigned some sort of score or weight in order for the user to derive a total IPS value for the particular category (set).

Dugan discloses a weighted score for the categories of Facilities and Improved which are used to assess physical attributes of a property. Furthermore, Dugan teaches ("However, the categories 110 and weights may be adjusted to better account for the various real estate markets, such as commercial, retail and residential properties, as well as for various locations,

such as rural, suburban, and urban properties...")-see col. 13 line 50- col. 14, and Figs. 6a-6m, 7a-7i. It is obvious from the teachings of Dugan that the categories relating to physical factors, i.e. Facilities and Improved could be assigned weights equal to an IPS value of 100 thereby allowing a user to obtain a physical rating.

Re claim 7: Dugan does not explicitly disclose:

multiplying each factor score for each of said plurality of physical factors by said weight indicator attributed to said each of said plurality of physical factors to obtain a weighted score for said each of said plurality of physical factors. Apgar however, teaches a system and method for evaluating real estate including (Indicator means a quantitative measure of a particular factor affecting Real Estate. The score is generally determined by five indicators...Weighting Factor is used to denote an empirically determined adjustment for each indicator..."-see cols. 2-3, also col. 8, lines 44-48 and cols. 7-15 (Amount, Price, Grade);

Although Dugan discloses an I.P.S value being total weighted score for each category derived by evaluating attributes pertaining to the category, e.g. water mains,

electricity in the Facilities category, and a Total Competitive Standard's Ratio being a total weighted score for all categories see Fig. 6a and related text, Dugan does not explicitly state for each of said plurality of sets, adding said weighted scores for each of said plurality of physical factors in said each of said sets to obtain a total score for said each of said plurality of sets. Apgar however, teaches adding the weighted amount for each indicator to arrive at a total weighted indicator score.-see fig. 21, col.16, lines 49-60, col.21, lines 57-63.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Dugan to include multiplying each factor score for each indicator to obtain a weighted score and adding the weighted indicators to arrive a total weighted indicator as taught by Apgar in order for the user to gain an understanding of what factors influenced the valuation of real estate property.

Although Apgar discloses weighted scores for each indicator and a total weighted score as a rating in Fig. 21, Apgar does not specifically disclose:

dividing each of said total scores for each of said plurality of sets by said number of physical factors in said

each of said plurality of sets to obtain an average score for
said each of said plurality of sets;

adding said average scores for each of said plurality of sets
to obtain a total weighted score.

Official Notice is taken that it is old and well known in the
art of Finance that weighted averages are commonly used to
arrive at a comprehensive number representing proportions of
multiple elements. For example, weighted averages are commonly
used in the valuing the cost of capital. Therefore, It would
have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the
time the invention was made to modify Apgar to include
calculating a weighted average score in order to provide the
user with another means of determining a value to be used as a
total indicator.

Re claim 8: Dugan discloses:

adding said weighted indicators of said plurality of sets
of physical factors to obtain a total weight indicator. Dugan
however, shows ("The total possible IPS value for any property
is 100...")-see col. 5, lines 3-4, and see Figs. 6a, 6c, 6g, 6i, 6k
("Total Competitive standard's ratio = (100)");

dividing said total weighted score by said total weight indicator to obtain a physical score. -see Dugan Fig. 7i, ("Total Standard Units 79%, 59%, 92%").

Re claims 9, 10, 11: Dugan discloses wherein the subject real estate property is an apartment complex, single family home, commercial property-see col. 4 lines 49-51.

Re claim 12: Apgar does not specifically disclose: converting said physical rating to an alphabetic score. Official notice is taken that it is old and well known in the art that converting a numerical score to an alphabetical score is common. For example, it is common for teachers to grade tests using a numerical score and then convert the score into a corresponding alphabetic score i.e. 90-100=A. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Apgar to include converting a numerical rating to an alphabetical one in order to provide a rating that may be easier for the user to understand and make a quick association to its meaning.

Re claim 13: Claim 13 has similar limitations found in claim 6, 7, and 8 in combination, and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale.

Claims 14, 15, 16, 17, 45 have similar limitations found in claims 9-12 above, and therefore are rejected by the same art and rationale.

Claim 41 has similar limitations found in claims 1 and 6 in combination and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale.

Claim 42 has similar limitations found in claim 6 above, and therefore are rejected by the same art and rationale.

Claim 43 has similar limitations found in claim 7 in above and is therefore rejecting using the same art and rationale.

Claim 44 has similar limitations found in claims 6 and 7 in combination and is therefore rejecting using the same art and rationale.

Claim 51 has similar limitations found in claim 6 above, and therefore is rejected by the same art and rationale.

Re Claim 52 and 53: Dugan disclose wherein the predetermined category is physical characteristic and location.-see Figs. 6a-6m and related text.

Claim 54 has similar limitations found in claim 41 above, and therefore are rejected by the same art and rationale.

Re claim 55: Dugan discloses wherein said delivery system provides to said user a property comparison report comprising: a comparison of physical and location ratings for at least two of said plurality of real estate properties-see Figs. 6m, 7i and related text.

Re claim 56: Dugan does not disclose wherein said property comparison report further comprises a comparison of market standard rental rates along with the basis upon which the market standard rental rates were calculated. Apgar however, teaches (Calculate the average Rent/SF for each SIC code....)-see col. 9 lines 5-39 and cols. 2-6 (rent and SIC), col. 8. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Dugan to include a calculation of average rent as taught by Apgar in order assist a user in making real estate decisions based on comparable real estate rentals as a factor.

3. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dugan in view of Three (*Three More Companies Become WebLink Wireless Enterprise Solutions Partners: Datamatic, LynkUs and VoiceLink Join 19 Other Companies in*

Wireless Data Effort. Pr Newswire, New York: May 4, 2000.

pg.1).

Re claim 3: Dugan does not disclose:

a subscriber database for storing data relating to subscribers to said system. Three however, shows ('LynkUs.com is a developer of Web-based services specifically for wireless subscribers. Through the ESP program, LynkUs plans to develop wireless data content for several industries. One key project, for the real estate industry, will provide wireless links to the Multiple Listing Service so realtors can access listings from their wireless devices, even when they're out of the office.")-see p.2, para. 2. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Dugan to include allowing only subscribers to access a database such as the Multiple Listing Service shown by Three in order to provide a secure and controlled means of accessing data.

(10) Response to Argument

The rejection of claim 56 under 35 U.S.C. §112 has been withdrawn due to the after final amendment entered for purposes of appeal on 4/12/2007.

The appellant argues that Dugan and Khedkar do not disclose "wherein said processor is configured to use at least one of said standard monetary value for each of said plurality of monetary value-effecting characteristics to obtain a market standard monetary value for each of said at least two of said plurality of real estate properties". The appellant further argues that the "adjustments" disclosed in Khedkar are made with respect to differences that depend upon the particular subject property selected which cannot be used to obtain the "market standard monetary value" as claimed, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., the market standard monetary value does not depend upon the selection of any particular property) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

Furthermore, the appellant discloses a definition of "Market Standard Value" or MSV on page 17 (IV.) of the specification, as follows: MSVs define an area's property value in context with other areas so that a more accurate comparison of the values of properties may be made...the process for

assessing a subject property's MSV comprises selecting a plurality of value-effecting characteristics that are generally associated with real estate properties of the type similar to the subject properties (step 80). Each value effecting characteristic is then assigned a standard monetary value, which can be either a positive or negative value (step 81).

In response to the appellant's argument that Khedkar does not provide a standard monetary value. The appellant broadly defines the phrase "standard monetary value" in the specification on page 17 lines 20 to 22, as "Each value effecting characteristic is then assigned a standard monetary value, which can be either a positive or negative value (step 81)."

Dugan discloses a real estate appraisal method using and ideal point system (IPS) for various groups of desirability factors. The appraisal is based upon a comparison of the total points value for each comparable property and the total IPS value of the subject property. The points are ultimately used to determine an appraised value in a monetary standard for the subject property.

The Khedkar reference was cited because of its teaching of a monetary value applied to attributes such as living area, lot

size, number of bedrooms, etc. Khedkar teaches a method and system for automated property valuation wherein ("Each property's sales price is adjusted to better reflect the subject property's value by using a rule set that uses additional property attributes as for example, construction quality, conditions, pools, fireplaces, etc.")-see col. 8 lines 53-56, and ("For example, Fig. 10 illustrates sample adjustment rules 200, which are triggered by differences between the subject property's and comparable's attributes. Fig. 11 shows possible adjustments 210 (in thousands of dollars) [standard monetary values] to a comparable's price, as a function of the different number of bathrooms between the subject and the comparable property. The adjustments taught by Khedkar are based on attributes can be positive or negative values. The adjustments are applied to attributes such as the number of bedrooms, number of bathrooms, lot size, living area, etc. See Khedkar, Figures 11-12.

In response to appellant's argument that the examiner's conclusion of obviousness is based upon improper hindsight reasoning, it must be recognized that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning. But so long as it takes into account

only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, and does not include knowledge gleaned only from the applicant's disclosure, such a reconstruction is proper. See *In re McLaughlin*, 443 F.2d 1392, 170 USPQ 209 (CCPA 1971).

In response to the appellant's argument that Dugan and Khedkar do not disclose two or more properties, the appellant's attention is directed to Fig. 6m and col. 13 line 51 to col. 14 line 43 wherein Dugan discloses an analysis that determines an appraisal values for comparable properties as well as for the subject property. Dugan specifically discloses ("Preferably, the appraisal of the subject property is based upon the analysis of from three to five comparable properties...")-see col. 14 lines 34-44.

In response to the argument concerning claim 6 and that Dugan does not teach or suggest that each of the desirability factors in a category be given a factor score to which an equal weight will be applied. The appellant claims the following limitation: "wherein said weight indicators of each of said plurality of physical factors in said each of said plurality of sets are equal." Dugan discloses ("However, the categories 110 and weights may be adjusted to better account for the various

real estate markets, such as commercial, retail and residential properties , as well as for various locations such as rural, suburban, and urban properties..."-see col. 13 line 50 to col. 14, and Figs. 6a-6m, 7a-7i. It is obvious from the teachings of Dugan that the categories relating to physical factors, i.e. Facilities and Improved could be assigned any weight relevant to the appraised property e.g., land or structure, that ultimately equals and IPS value of 100 thereby allowing the user to obtain solely a physical rating. For example, Figs. 6a-6m concern appraisals of residences and therefore the IPS weights are applied to categories most relevant to the analysis of a residential property. Figures 7a-7i concern appraisals of rural residential acreage and the IPS weights are applied to reflect the analysis of factors most relevant to rural residential acreage.

In response to the appellant's argument regarding claim 56 and Apgar does not teach market standard rental rates. Apgar teaches calculating an average rent per square foot for each standard industry classification code. The "average rental rate" is the market standard rental rate.

Additionally, although the argued elements may be found as examples and/or embodiments in the specification, they were not

claimed explicitly in the disputed claim(s). Nor was the terminology used in the disputed claim(s) defined in the specification to require these limitations. A reading of the specification provides no evidence to indicate that these limitations must be imported into the claims to give meaning to disputed terms. Therefore, although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993) and MPEP §2111.01.

(11) Related Proceeding(s) Appendix

No decision rendered by a court or the Board is identified by the examiner in the Related Appeals and Interferences section of this examiner's answer.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,


Eida Milef
Examiner, AU 3692

Conferees:

Kambiz Abdi


Andrew Fischer for
Vincent Millin



